New Warner School of Education Building to be Named in Honor of the Late Raymond F. LeChase

The University of Rochester’s Board of Trustees has approved the construction of a new home for the Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development. The building will be named in memory of the late Raymond F. LeChase, founder of LeChase Construction Services, LLC, who was a pioneer in the Rochester construction community, renowned philanthropist, and dedicated supporter of education.

Raymond’s son R.Wayne LeChase and his wife Beverly have made a $3.5 million commitment to the University in recognition of the important role education plays in improving lives and strengthening the community. The gift will allow the Warner School of Education to break ground next month and to expand fundraising efforts for its construction and the important research, teaching, and education reform programs it will enable.

“Wayne and Beverly’s leadership and support will help to make the creation of a new home for the Warner School a reality, and we are proud to partner with them to honor Wayne’s father and his father’s legacy in the Rochester community,” said University President Joel Seligman. “Raymond F. LeChase Hall will commemorate the many years of generosity and service which the LeChases have given to...
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the University of Rochester. Their leadership is pivotal to creating a new facility that supports the University's commitment to improving K-12 education—one of the greatest challenges we face in the 21st century.”

Raymond’s commitment to social responsibility and the community were founding principles of his company and a legacy that his son Wayne continues as chairman of LeChase Construction and as a Rochester community leader, Seligman said. Wayne also serves the University as a member of the Board of Trustees and advisor and member of key Medical Center leadership groups, helping to shape the future of the University as a volunteer and donor. He and Beverly are charter members of the George Eastman Circle, the University’s leadership annual giving society.

Raymond F. LeChase Hall is the first major building to be constructed in the historic Wilson Quadrangle on River Campus in 30 years. A four-story, 65,000-square-foot facility, it provides a unified home for the Warner School and will feature an expansive suite of 14 classrooms on the first floor that will serve the College during the day and the Warner School in the evening, providing an efficient solution to the critical need for classroom space on River Campus. The Warner School will be housed on the upper three floors, unified by a dramatic three-story atrium, with additional classrooms, offices, and spaces specifically designed to support the preparation and professional development of educators and the conduct of educational research and reform work.

“My family and I are honored to be a part of this new facility,” said Wayne LeChase. “I was raised to believe in the values of hard work, perseverance, commitment, and community, and there is no better way to see these ideals come to life than through the support of an institution committed to preparing our future educators. These educators in turn will teach our children a love of learning and prepare them to become the leaders of our future. The Warner School of Education is a valuable asset to our community, and we are very excited to watch this come to fruition.”

“All of us at Warner are grateful for Wayne and Beverly’s generosity and service and for our shared aspirations for building a great learning environment for the preparation of teachers, counselors, and educational leaders in our community,” said Raffaella Borasi, dean of the Warner School. “This is the second transformative gift in Warner’s history after the naming of the School in 1993 by William F. Scandling to honor his late wife, Margaret Warner. This building will create an environment that will not only support teaching and learning, but allow us to work collaboratively with each other and the community to research complex education problems and forge effective solutions.”

The Warner School of Education, founded in 1958, is involved in several education reform
projects in the Rochester community. Many of these projects will greatly benefit from the new facilities. In particular, the Warner School launched the new Horizons Summer Program in 2010 to help Rochester children improve their academic performance, raise their personal aspirations, and discover a love of learning. With the new building, Horizons will become a demonstration site that helps to strengthen Warner’s teacher preparation program, and the School will gradually expand the program to include grades kindergarten through eighth, eventually serving nearly 150 students each summer as an integral part of the University’s commitment to the Rochester community.

In the past decade, the Warner School has grown faster than any other academic division within the University. The School has doubled its student enrollment, more than doubled support from state and federal grants, and tripled its budget and the number of fully-funded doctoral students. At more than 600 full- and part-time graduate students and 60 faculty and staff members, the Warner School has outgrown its current building space in Dewey Hall. The new building will allow for up to an additional 20 percent growth, enabling the School to strengthen its existing programs and stay at the forefront of education.

According to a 2008 Center for Governmental Research report, the construction phase of the building will have a substantial economic and fiscal impact locally. The project will boost the Rochester economy with 260 direct and 200 spillover construction jobs and generate nearly $1.25 million in sales tax and income tax revenue to the Rochester region and New York State.

LeChase Construction will assist in constructing Raymond F. LeChase Hall. As the architect of record, Bergmann Associates of Rochester designed the facility with help from SHW Group, a Michigan firm with extensive background in designing creative learning environments.

The estimated cost of the project is $24 million. Raymond F. LeChase Hall is tentatively scheduled to open January 2013. For the latest updates on the construction of Raymond F. LeChase Hall or to learn more about the building, please visit www.warner.rochester.edu/building.
Raymond F. LeChase was born in 1913 to Giacomo and Civita LeChase in Rochester, New York. Raymond started working as a water boy at the age of 14 for A. Fredericks & Son and rapidly worked his way to become a superintendent.

Raymond married Rachel Palumbo in 1943, and one year later, a son, Raymond Wayne was born. Following Wayne’s birth, two daughters were born, Gloria and Eleanor. Their three children went on to extend the LeChase family to include many beloved grandchildren and great grandchildren.

In 1944, Raymond founded LeChase Construction Company, filling the demand for local construction work during World War II. Raymond’s beginnings as a businessman were modest. He personally drove workers to job sites, while Rachel handled payroll and accounting. Raymond’s first major project, a $90,000 contract with the Kanty Paper Company, was to construct a production center for assembling paper boxes located on Carter Street in Rochester, New York.

R. Wayne LeChase, a practicing attorney, joined the firm in 1975 and succeeded his father as President in 1981. Raymond remained as Chairman of the company overseeing projects and providing guidance and valuable advice for the remainder of his life. Raymond visited job sites daily and took great pride in the construction process.

Raymond built the company on family and strong moral values. This practice continues today. Raymond believed that dedication, loyalty and hard work, of both, employees and management, working together, had and will continue to motivate and provide the “success culture” necessary to maintain a controlled and successful growth.

LeChase Construction interests are not restricted to their own operation. They believe in taking responsibility for improving the quality of life in their community. Raymond was personally involved with many community service organizations and boards including: the Rochester War Memorial Commission, Brighton Rotary, New York State Urban Development Corporation – Board of Commissioners, Nazareth College Board of Trustees and President’s Steering Committee, University of Rochester Advisory Committee, Rochester Area Multiple Sclerosis Advisory Committee, and the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce.

Raymond was 95 years of age when he passed away, at home with his loved ones. He will always be remembered as an honorable businessman, husband, father, grandfather, friend, colleague and community advocate. He will always be dearly missed.

Building Features

- A three-story open atrium, with a 1,600-square-foot lobby on the first floor
- 14 general classrooms (to be used by the College of Arts and Sciences during the day and Warner in the evening and summer)
- 15 open common areas for casual conversation and impromptu meetings, including 6 group study booths on the classroom level and a 23-seat balcony lounge overlooking the Wilson Quadrangle
- A 1,250-square-foot multi-purpose event space, to be used for lectures, meetings, and professional development events at select times, and otherwise available as a student lounge/study space
- A reading room, with a children’s library and a cozy spot for reading and working with children
- A methods classroom, designed as a teacher preparation classroom and to host secondary students for afterschool activities and camps
- A counseling classroom with observation capabilities
- A technology classroom for research methods and technology-rich classes
- A technology and research lab, allowing for printing and technology use even when the technology classroom is in use
- A 1,600-square-foot student center, with a mailroom and lounge for all students, and a doctoral student office, with lockers, carrels, and tables
- 93 faculty and staff offices
- 10 breakout rooms for meetings, class breakout sessions, and group study
- 5 kitchenettes for faculty, staff, and student use
- 2 conference rooms
- A catering kitchen